

Post Update

Wanted ...
The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department wants you!
Candidates interested in becoming a police officer for the CMPD will have to take the Darany Entry Level Police Officers Examination at 9:30 a.m., Jan. 17, in the ACAP office.
For more information call, Capt. Don Harkey (704) 432-1615.

Moved ...
The Fort Stewart Special Forces recruiting office has moved to Bldg. 160, across from the main post shoppette and behind the post retention office.
For more information, call Sgts. 1st Class Derrick Booker and Robert Hughes, 767-1400.

Get educated ...
An Educational Coffee will be held 9:30 a.m., Jan. 10, at the Army Education Center, Bldg. 100.
Army Education Counselors will be on hand to take questions concerning GED, college education and financial assistance.

PWOC ...
The Protestant Women of the Chapel invite you to attend, "God's Workout Plan." Come exercise your faith and body with the PWOC.
The fun kicks off 9:30 a.m., Jan. 10, at the Vale Chapel. Childcare is available.
For more information, call Melissa Miller, 877-7207 or email, jesusluvsu2day@hotmail.com.

Taxes ...
The Marne Tax Center will be open 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday - Friday, starting Jan. 17, at 373 Hase Road, Bldg. 50B.
The Hunter Army Airfield Tax Center will be open 9 a.m., Monday - Friday, starting Jan. 23, at 638 Horace Emmet Wilson Blvd., Bldg. 1211.
For more information call, 767-8809/8819 (FSGA) or 303-3675/3697 (HAAF).

News



Mount up ...
Soldiers from the 1st Cav. Div. Horse Cav. Det. march in Rose Parade, page 14A.



Constant reminder ...
Saddam Hussein's former prison is now home to 2nd BCT, page 15A.

DoD announces shared physical exam program

Frontline staff

The Shared Exam Program is only for Soldiers who are filing a claim with Veterans Affairs.
Soldiers currently receive this information during their mandatory ACAP Briefing.

Soldiers are screened on a case-by-case basis for the Shared Exam Program, however there are still some time limitations.
This program allows Soldiers to file a claim for disabilities with the VA prior to being separated.
Separating Soldiers need to meet some basic criteria which will be determined by

the VA Counselor.
Soldiers need to get into the program no more than 60 days out from their final out appointment; final out being prior to permissive temporary duty and terminal leave.
The length of time a Soldier will need to fully benefit from this program is

dependent upon the extent of his/her claim (i.e. neurological, optical, orthopedic).
If the Soldier's claim requires him to be evaluated by a specialty service it takes longer to process, so the earlier he see's counselor, the better!
See Exam ————— **Page 11A**

Fort Stewart



Staff Sgt. Don Smith

Tim Beaty, chief, DPW Fish and Wildlife Branch, examines an artificial woodpecker cavity. Wildlife management programs helped Fort Stewart and Hunter win the 2005 Secretary of the Army's Environmental Quality Team Award.

Fort Stewart, HAAF win environmental award

Congratulations from the Secretary of the Army

Congratulations! The 2004 Army Performance Excellence Award Program panel of judges has selected your command's application as the Program's Silver winner. As the Army's capstone award program for organizational performance excellence, APEA recognizes your organization's overall performance and improvement efforts. You can be justly proud of this honor in recognition of the remarkable efforts put forth, leading to this accomplishment.
One of the Army's top priorities is Business Transformation and the improvement results evidenced in your application are indicative of the positive impacts that thorough organizational deployment can achieve. The essence of the APEA program is the Army Performance Improvement Criteria, which closely parallels the criteria used by world-class organizations as a tool to assess their performance at all levels. Army organizations using the APIC are better positioned to refine their key value creation processes and implement Lean Six Sigma as an approach to improvement leading to enhancing innovation and creating business success.
Due to the Army's greatest challenge of fighting and winning the Global War on Terrorism while continuing its most extensive transformation since World War II, we are unable to fund the monetary component of this program. While the decision to not fund the monetary component of the program was a difficult one, it was made in the interest of the Army's most important resource – its people. I extend my best wishes on this superb achievement.
Sincerely,
Francis J. Harvey

Frontline staff

Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield have won the 2005 Secretary of the Army's Environmental Award in the Environmental Quality Team category.
This year's focus was on the Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield Sustainability Management Team, whose programs include environmental management systems implementation, fish and wildlife management, forestry management, environmental compliance, and community outreach.
"It was a team effort, I'm glad to be part of the team and it's a great team to work for," said Tim Beaty, Fort Stewart Environmental Office.
Other team members are Tressa Rutland, Tommy Hilliard, George Harris, Veronica Frazier and David Hodges.
The Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield Environmental Office competes each year and won the award in the Natural Resources Conservation category in 2003.
This annual award is the Army's highest honor for outstanding environmental stewardship programs, which are on the forefront of Army efforts focused on endangered species protection, historic preservation, waste reduction, environmental restoration, pollution prevent and weapons system acquisition.
Each year, Army environmental professionals from around the world compete for recognition in six categories.
Winners of the awards will go on to compete against the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps for the Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards.
Other winners of the 2005 Secretary of the Army Environmental Awards are Fort Campbell, Ky., for Environmental Quality; Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., for Cultural Resources Management; Fort Lewis, Wash., for Environmental Restoration; Tobyhanna Army Depot, Pa., for Pollution Prevention; Fort Custer Training Center, Michigan Army National Guard, Mich., for Natural Resources Conservation.
Minnesota Army National Guard Natural Resources Conservation Team, Minn., for Natural Resources Conservation-Team and Sacramento District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pyramid Lake Torpedo and Bombing Range Site Restoration Project, Nev., for Environmental Restoration-Team.

FSI

HAAF

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

R	RESOURCES	
O	OPTIMIZE	
C	COMPLIANCE	
K	KEEP IMPROVING	
	Sustainable FS/HAAF	

Environmental programs meet criteria for excellence

The Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Francis J. Harvey, announced today the award winners for environmental excellence during fiscal year 2005.
Five installations and four teams will receive the Secretary of the Army's environmental award for their dedication to environmental stewardship while sustaining the Army's mission.
Some of the noteworthy accomplishments credited to this year's winners include programs that enhanced wildlife habitat while providing ideal training conditions; that safely and successfully cleaned-up contamination with significant cost savings; that preserved invaluable state cultural history; that created innovative pollution prevention approaches; and that fielded weapon systems built with both the Soldier and environmental safety in mind.
"The Army is committed to good environmental stewardship and the long-term sustainability of its installations," said Tad Davis, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for the Environment, Safety and Occupational Health.
"We can't send our Soldiers out to engage the Global War on Terror without training them as they need to fight, but we don't have to sacrifice the environment to provide that training," he said. "As these awardees so ably show, we use innovation, dedication, and hard work to balance readiness with environmental sustainability."
For details about the fiscal year 2005 Secretary of the Army Environmental Awards recipients visit the U.S. Army Environmental Centers web site at <http://aec.army.mil/>.

Baghdad grows while insurgency weakens, U.S. general says

Gerry J. Gilmore
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON —
Burgeoning reconstruction activity is now evident in and around Baghdad while terrorist attacks in the Iraqi capital city have weakened since the Dec. 15 elections, a senior U.S. military officer in Baghdad told reporters here, Jan. 2.
"When I fly around Baghdad these days, I see the city expanding in large numbers of houses being built on the edges of the city in nearly every direction," Army Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr., commander of Multinational Division Baghdad, told Pentagon reporters during a satellite news conference broadcast from Iraq.
This activity, Webster said, indicates Baghdad's residents have faith both in their rejuvenating economy and for the future.
Baghdad's municipal sewer and water services also have improved, Webster said, since his unit took over security duty for the city and surrounding region from the 1st Cavalry Division on Feb. 27. Webster is also the commanding general of the U.S. Army's 3th Infantry Division based out of Fort Stewart, Ga.

The military contingent under Webster's command, known as Task Force Baghdad, consists of around 30,000 troops including soldiers from Estonia, Georgia and Macedonia, as well as about 19,000 troops from the 3rd Infantry Division and other U.S. elements.
"Our mission was to improve the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces, fight the insurgency, to secure Baghdad and the surrounding areas, and support the (Iraqi) government's development," Webster said.
Over the past year, the number of Iraqi Soldiers and police in Baghdad has increased 10-fold, Webster said. Today, Soldiers of the Iraqi 6th Division and Iraqi special police are providing stability and law and order across 60 percent of Baghdad, the general said. A year ago, he said, there was only one Iraqi army battalion in Baghdad.
"And now there are 22 (Iraqi battalions) in Baghdad," Webster said. "With 12 of them in charge of their own areas of operations."
The Iraqi 6th Division in Baghdad boasts six brigades, he said.
Large numbers of Baghdad's citizens felt secure enough to cast their ballots during the Dec. 15 election, Webster said, noting 60 percent or more of the city's registered voters went to the polls.
Iraqi Security Forces, supported by coalition troops, provided that security prior to and during the elections, Webster said. Task Force Baghdad

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VOICES AND VIEWPOINTS

Marne Six Sends



Maj. Gen. William G. Webster
Commanding General, 3rd Inf. Div.

For three years the Marne team has been on a pace that most people would find difficult to maintain.

We were at the point of the spear that took down the repressive regime of Saddam Hussein.

Our Soldiers returned home and became the Army's lead division for modularity.

And true to form, we were the first division to return to Iraq and help build a very capable Iraqi Army, creating a safe and secure environment for their first constitutional referendum and free elections.

Our Marne Warriors have fought side by side on the streets of Baghdad, adopting great brigades from 28 other states and three European

nations. Our brigades also made up the bulk of the combat power of the 42nd and 101st Infantry divisions.

History has been made and continues to evolve in Iraq thanks to the grit and determination of our Soldiers and the constant sacrifice of courageous Iraqi security forces and citizens seeking a free and democratic Iraq.

We have seen the first Medal of Honor recipient of the Global War on Terrorism awarded to Sgt. 1st Class Paul Smith. A Marne Soldier and true example of the Warrior Ethos and Army Values that make our Army the best in the world; he was a true hero.

I have seen many others exemplify these same



traits of leadership and selfless service time and time again in our Dog-Face Soldiers during Operation Iraqi Freedom III. Soldiers were constantly giving of themselves, paying the ultimate sacrifice for our nation and for the Iraqi people.

Our Soldiers are a testament of human spirit and a love for freedom.

No one can truly dispute the noble cause we are fighting for, and this is made stronger by the support we receive from the American public.

Family readiness groups stood tall in our Fort Stewart, Hunter Army Airfield and Fort Benning communities and provided unwavering support

to spouses, children and parents. The list of recipients is endless. We could not have accomplished our mission without you.

Marne Soldiers stand strong knowing that the home team is secure and supportive. You too are heroes in this war. We wholeheartedly extend to you our thanks. The rear detachment kept the troops and FRGs ready and secure.

Finally, as we come to a close on our current mission, I ask that you continue to keep the 4th Infantry Division in your thoughts and prayers. They are set for success and will continue to break the will of terrorists here in Iraq and build upon the successes of the Marne Division.

Remember, we can accomplish anything if we focus on the mission — take care of our people; and build and sustain a great team.

Mission...Soldiers...Teamwork

Solemn New Year's Eve will never be forgotten

Brig. Gen. Mari K. Eder
U.S. Army Deputy Public Affairs

WASHINGTON — I could have spent New Year's Eve sipping champagne over a fine meal with old friends. Or I could have huddled with a few thousand new friends in New York's Times Square, awaiting the drop of a crystal ball.

Instead, I experienced a singular, poignant honor.

I rang in the new year in the company of fallen heroes. Along with Soldiers from The Old Guard, I went to Dover Air Force Base to welcome six casualties of war home for the last time.

This time it was much harder than the other times I've been to Dover. I went to Dover four times last year and raised my hand in the slow three-second salute as 65 fallen had passed before me — Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airmen and civilians. Sixty-five flags.

This time it was New Year's Eve and there were six transfer cases on the flight in from Kuwait.

It is an honor to witness this ceremony and it is never easy. Perhaps it was harder because I was thinking so much on the flight up to Delaware.

Each of these six had seen Christmas pass in a war zone, only to die shortly thereafter.

Each had seen Christmas far from home and were undoubtedly looking forward to the New Year. None could have thought they would return so soon.

The chaplain said a prayer before the ceremony began, inside the 747. He spoke not to us standing there, but to the fallen, saying tenderly "Welcome home, fallen warriors."

He was nearly whispering as he

thanked them for answering the call to duty but everyone could hear him fine. There wasn't another sound inside.

It was cold on the flight line and there was a dense fog that shrouded the lights and softened the lines of distant aircraft and hangers. Again I marched out with escorts and stood with the Air Force and Army honor guards.

Afterward I made sure I had time to say thank you to the USO representative, an Air Force wife who took the time to make a New Year's dinner for the participants -- pork and sauerkraut.

Then I had a moment to talk to the Honor Guards. I told them that I thought some of them had probably been chagrined when they learned they had duty on New Year's Eve.

They were all young men, babies by the looks of some of them, but they probably had other plans that had to be changed.

And then, they probably had a moment of guilt and their feelings changed — after all, those they were there to honor had no choice about their return home. And they would never see another New Year's Eve. I then challenged them all to remember this night.

Next New Year's Eve, I told them, wherever you are — with friends or family, take a moment to remember those who cannot be with us to celebrate and raise your glass to them.

And in years to come — tell the story of where you were on this New Year's Eve and how very special it was to be part of this ceremony, what an honor to be chosen to welcome back the fallen. Don't forget them.

I never will.

Rumsfeld: Redeploying forces now would embolden terrorists to attack

Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

MOSUL, Iraq — Withdrawing U.S. forces from Iraq now would mean victory for terror and lead to attacks on American interests abroad and at home, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld told Soldiers.

Rumsfeld spoke at a dining facility and served Christmas Eve dinner to troops of Multinational Force Northwest at Forward Operating Base Courage here.

The secretary said withdrawing U.S. forces from Iraq prematurely would lead to attacks on American interests abroad and in the homeland. "The terrorists — emboldened by their victory — would attack us elsewhere in this region and at home in the United States," he said.

He said the war on terror is a test of wills. "Generations before you have persevered and prevailed," he said. "And they too, were engaged in a test of wills."

Freedom ultimately prevails, he added, "through the dedication and perseverance of those wearing America's uniform."

The secretary said the purpose of terrorism is to terrorize. "It's to alter peoples' behavior," he said. "It's to make free people something other than free people. It's to alter our behavior in such a way as to inflict their dark vision upon us."

Rumsfeld noted the Iraqis are America's allies in the fight against terror.

The Iraqi security forces are growing in numbers and capabilities, he said, and millions of Iraqis showed they wanted freedom by voting in the Dec. 15 election. The secretary pointed out that the Iraqi economy grew by 4 percent in 2004 and is expected to increase by double digits this year. The Iraqi people show their hope by starting new businesses and erecting new buildings, he added.

The secretary noted that the holiday season is a time of reflection. "It's also a time when you can reflect on what a very special place the United States of America is," he said. "In the long war against terrorists and violent extremists ... what makes our country so special is our free way of life. And that, of course, is precisely what the enemies of freedom are trying to deny us."

Though serving away from home is particularly difficult this time, of year, Rumsfeld told the servicemembers they're making history in Iraq. "In this holiday season, there is no better gift that you can offer your children than what you are giving today," he said.

Rumsfeld said that in the future, when their children and grandchildren ask what they did when Iraq moved from a tyranny to a democracy, they can say with pride that they helped



Jim Garamone

Task Force Freedom Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Pring passes out phone cards donated by Wal-Mart to Soldiers at the dining facility at Forward Operating Base Courage in Mosul, Iraq. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld brought the cards during a Christmas Eve visit to the base.

make history.

He spoke of those Americans who have been killed in the war on terror. "Their mission is in your hands," he said. "And that mission is to offer once-dark corners what Abraham Lincoln called a 'new birth of freedom.'"

The secretary ended with a personal note. "I have lived a long life," he said. "It's hard to think of anything I've ever done that is as important or gives me as much pleasure as working with each of you. Doing what you are doing, you are so professional, you are well-trained, you are well-led and you have set an example in the world that will be remembered."

He told the Soldiers that when they read or hear things that doubt the future, "know that there have always been doubts expressed. There have always been those who suggested that the cause could not be successful, that the cause would be lost. In fact, it was the people who persevered who proved them wrong. The great sweep of human history is for freedom. And we're on the side of freedom."

Marne Voices Speak Out

What is your New Year's resolution?

"To manage my finances better."

Adrienne Martin
Family member



"Don't drink as much."

Sgt. Terry Seibeck
1st Bn., 41st FA



"To eat healthier."

Joyce Rapozo
Retired service member



"To lose weight."

Rochelle Smith
Family member



"Get in shape, or at least, in better shape."

Master Sgt. Chris Lemmons
621st Contingency Response Wing



"Pray hard to bring all the Soldiers home."

Sgt. Daniel Johnson
166th Maint. Co.



Voice your opinion!
Write a letter to the editor!

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MILITARY NEWS: 767-3440
ADVERTISING: (912) 368-0526
THE Frontline OFFICE: 767-5669

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Command. It is published weekly by the Public Affairs Office, Fort Stewart, Ga. 31314-5000. All editorial content of the Frontline newspaper is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the Public Affairs Office of Fort Stewart, Georgia and the 3rd Infantry Division and is printed by Morris Newspaper Corporation of Hinesville, Inc., a

private firm in no way connected with the Department of the Army, under exclusive written contract with Fort Stewart, Georgia. The civilian printer is responsible for commercial advertising. Subscription rates ar \$9 - 3 months, \$16 - six months and \$30 for 12 months. Rates are Third Class mail inside the continental U.S.

Protective face shield saves lives

Spc. Derek Del Rosario
100th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

BAGHDAD — Citizens of Baghdad have recently seen a new face to the Soldiers driving through their city.

Gunners in convoys have been peering through a thick plastic glass mounted on their helmets. This face shield was designed to give added protection to Soldiers “outside the wire,” specifically gunners, whose faces are exposed to many potential threats.

The face shield has received mixed reviews from Soldiers in Task Force Baghdad, prompting the question, “Is the face shield worth it?”

The command group of the 3rd Infantry Division said the answer to this question is a definite yes, citing that the face shield provides Soldiers with face protection from a wide range of threats.

The 3.5-pound face shield is made of acrylic and bullet-resistant polycarbonate materials, and was designed to provide Soldiers with added protection from small arms fire and shrapnel from explosions.

Lt. Col. Virginia Yates, 3rd Inf. Div. Surgeon, said the face shield’s lifesaving potential makes it of the utmost importance to wear.

“The idea to use face shields was first suggested by the 86th Combat Support Hospital ophthalmologist who saw potential to save the rest of the face not covered by the ballistic eyewear,” Yates said.

“In the division, we track the incidents of battle injuries in several ways. One of these ways we track battle injuries is by location of wound on the body. We elected to purchase face shields for the division based on trends in facial injuries that might have been prevented with face shield coverage, especially coverage for our gunners.”

Some of these wound trends surrounded fatal facial injuries sustained during explosions, she added.

Preventing injuries from airborne debris is exactly the reason why the face shield is absolutely necessary said Capt. Jason Caboot, Battalion Surgeon, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry. Rocks or bricks thrown at Soldiers are a big threat, he added.

“The easiest way to measure the success of the face shield is to look at the number of Soldiers we have treated at the aid station with facial injuries,” Caboot said. “We have treated seven Soldiers this year with significant enough facial injury that they were evacuated to the aid station.”

Caboot said the injuries were serious enough that one Soldier, a tank commander, had a fractured nose and cheek bone from an air-born rock; and another Soldier was evacuated back to the U.S. with a wired jaw caused by a thrown brick.

While some Soldiers have reservations about wearing the face shield, Maj. Benjamin Ervin, 3rd Inf. Div. medical operations officer, said their safety is far too important to overlook.

“Soldiers have discomfort wearing a lot of things, like (mission oriented protective posture) suits or protective masks, but these things are issued to help Soldiers,” Ervin said. “(The face shield) is kind of the same concept. The idea is to protect Soldiers so they can get home in one piece. It’s just one way of how leadership is looking out for Soldiers in order to minimize injury.”

Ervin is also optimistic that the face shield will continue to evolve, and that a more comfortable design could be made while still maintaining its protective capability.

“There are always improvements that can be made, just like the improvements to the kevlar helmet, or the switch from flak vests to vests with SAPI plates,” Ervin said. “Like computers, (military technology) continues to evolve, and we can only hope the face shield can evolve as well. Perhaps a thinner glass can be designed so that



Courtesy photo

The ballistic protective face shield weighs roughly 3 lbs.

it doesn’t weigh so much, but this is what we have in the meantime, and I think it’s important for Soldiers’ safety.”

No matter what a Soldier’s feelings are on the face shield, Ervin says the ultimate intention is clear: to get the Soldiers home in one piece.

“Like all of our leaders in the 3rd (Infantry Division), we want our Soldiers to get home injury free, so we try our best to get the Soldiers what they need to protect themselves,” he said. “We don’t like to read the casualty reports; if there is something we can do about it, we will, and the face shield is just one of those ways.”

SMA Preston, USO tour visit Camp Liberty during holiday tour



Spc. Derek Delrosario

Spc. Derek Delrosario
100th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq — Task Force Baghdad Soldiers were treated to an early holiday present when comedians, dancers and singers entertained them during the Sgt. Maj. of the Army’s Hope and Freedom Tour Dec. 21.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston led the tour that took the celebrities through Afghanistan, Kuwait and Iraq to entertain and visit with the troops.

Tour participants included comedian Al Franken; actress Taylor Howard; Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders Misty Cleveland and Lynlee Allen; hip-hop band Soul Jahz; and country singers Keni Thomas, Craig Morgan and Mark Wills.

The USO celebrities also toured other areas of military operations. Franken was especially moved by a hospital visit he made while on the tour.

“I liked going to the hospital in the Green Zone because I’m very interested in some of the lives that have been saved,” Franken said. “It amazes me how quickly (medical personnel) respond and seeing the medical techniques they apply.”

Franken said he is very happy to be part of the USO and the show is just one way to say thank you.

“We did meet and greets at Abu Ghraib, but we ended up doing an impromptu show for those Soldiers, Marines and Airmen,” Franken said. “The tour has been great; I have a great group of people I am traveling with and it’s always good to see our Soldiers. It is always fun, moving, gratifying and humbling.”

Country singer Craig Morgan interacts with Soldiers while he performed during the Army’s Hope and Freedom Tour USO show Dec. 21. Morgan was accompanied by Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston and other stars.

Program teaches construction skills to young Iraqis



Apprentices in Habbaniyah, Iraq, mark a measurement. The apprentices are helping to rebuild their town while learning valuable skills that will serve them for life.



Participants in the Iraq Construction Apprentice Program build a set of stairs.



Lt. Col. Stephen Grumbach of the Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence and Chuck Kubic, president of contractor ECC International, help to distribute tool kits to graduates of the Iraq Construction Apprentice Program. A nonprofit group, "Spirit of America," donates the tool kits.

Elaine Eliah
American Forces Press Service

HABBANIYAH, Iraq — While western Iraq's Anbar province was making headlines with its voter turnout this month, a quieter turnout of its young men was making headway graduating from school.

In Habbaniyah, a volatile city where rockets and mortars destroy buildings and lives all too suddenly and frequently, the Iraq Construction Apprentice Program is facilitating Iraqi rebuilding efforts, one brick and one life at a time.

The apprentice course began in September at the military base here, an old British base that the Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence contracted ECC International to renovate so the Iraqi Army could establish a presence in Anbar. In the program, apprentices ages 16 – 22 learn the construction skills most needed at the job site and most likely to find them future employment when the base work is complete.

Students were a cultural cross-section of Sunni and Shiia, like the city of Habbaniyah itself, and like virtually all the city's 30,000 residents, they shared a common bond of poverty, illiteracy and total lack of opportunity.

The ICAP program had more ambitious goals than simply teaching skill sets, officials said. ECCI benefits from higher skilled labor, AFCEE gets an improved product, and Iraq realizes a boost in construction sector capacity. Parents found new hope seeing their sons enter the labor market, and the local economy improved as the student stipends supplemented family income. For the young men, self-esteem grew along with competence. But more importantly, officials said, the hope is that self-reliance will make these young men less vulnerable to the appeal of insurgent leaders.

"The locals are less likely to attack when everybody is benefiting," explained AFCEE's Lt. Col. Stephen Grumbach. "This program is improving the lives of Iraqi people and making it safer for us."

Retired Navy Rear Adm. Chuck Kubic, ECCI president, on Dec. 22 told CNN reporter Kyra Phillips on that the program is helping Iraqis and Americans alike. "The work these kids are doing is helping to build their own country and helping the transition to the Iraqi Army replacing our own troops," he said.

Kubic had the idea for the apprentice classes when he led the U.S. Navy Seabees into Anbar. Seabee engineers became his first teachers, and his first students were mainly adult men, desperate to earn even the student stipend to support their families. After returning to Iraq in civilian clothes, Kubic wanted to continue this training effort, concentrating on the specific skills required to improve quality on ECCI's construction projects and reaching out to younger apprentices. "What we're seeing now is that the older men already have jobs," he said. Lack of reading, writing, and basic arithmetic skills did not preclude class entry, but the students, some as young as 12 years old, had to clear military intelligence screening.

Postponement of the six-week class was necessary during Ramadan, when Muslim families partake in daily fasting and late-night festivities. A drive-by shooting at the entry gate two days before the start of classes reduced enrollment only slightly, Kubic said, but when a colleague was kidnapped and killed, it took somewhat longer to bring students back.

"This classroom was only five meters from where a mortar round exploded several weeks ago while class was in session," Kubic said, "but even this didn't stop the desire to learn."

Two vacant buildings, side-by-side, were selected for the school. The original plan was for students to study in one and sleep in the other. But the apprentices' parents — concerned about security or uncomfortable about overexposure to American ways — did not want their sons staying on the base. School staff instead met students each morning at the base entry point, where they were searched and given badges along with arriving construction workers.

ECCI installed electricity, air conditioners and windows, but the balance of building renovation became part of the course. Students practiced plastering, surface preparation and painting while fixing up their own classroom. They learned about hand tools while putting together their own school desks.

As many students could not read, all lessons included lectures and demonstrations given by ECCI's bilingual superintendents and engineers. The curriculum alternated class time with on-the-job practice, and safety lessons were an inherent part of each day's work.

"This is like a shop class," Grumbach said at graduation ceremonies. "I am told this is the only school that some of these Iraqi kids have had."

On graduation day, Grumbach and Navy Cmdr. Scott Lister, an engineer with the Multinational Security Transition Command Iraq, helped Kubic and the ECCI staff distribute certificates and graduation tool kits consisting of a toolbox, a level, a tape measure, a file, a hammer, a spatula and a hardhat.

Spirit of America, a nonprofit organization that also had helped graduates of Kubic's Seabee program, donated the kits. Michele Redmond, Spirit of America project director, said the organization seeks to extend the goodwill of the American people and support American military and civilian personnel "and people who call to Americans for help in their struggle for freedom and democracy."

A new beginners class starts in early 2006, and some of the most promising current graduates will be invited to participate in advanced apprentice training. All students are welcome to use their new skills and new tools to help ECCI renovate Habbaniyah's classic old British Hotel, which will serve as headquarters for the Iraqi Army's 7th Division.

"This is the part of Iraq within which these young builders must now grow, develop, and apply their new skills," Kubic said. "They must now do their part to build a new Iraq democracy and a country where they can live in peace with freedom."

Photos by ECC International



Donna Miles

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency expects the portable Radar Scope to look similar to this model and to be fielded as soon as this spring to help patrols conducting urban operations to sense if someone is inside a building.

New device will sense through concrete walls

Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Troops conducting urban operations soon will have the capabilities of superheroes, being able to sense through 12 inches of concrete to determine if someone is inside a building.

The new "Radar Scope" will give warfighters searching a building the ability to tell within seconds if someone is in the next room, Edward Baranoski from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's Special Projects Office, told the American Forces Press Service.

By simply holding the portable, handheld device up to a wall, users will be able to detect movements as small as breathing, he said.

The Radar Scope, developed by DARPA, is expected to be fielded to troops in Iraq as soon as this spring, Baranoski said. The device is likely to be fielded to the squad level, for use by troops going door to door in search of terrorists.

The Radar Scope will give warfighters the capability to sense through a foot of concrete and 50 feet beyond that into a room, Baranoski explained.

It will bring to the fight what larger, commercially available motion detectors couldn't, he said. Weighing just a pound and a half, the Radar Scope will be about the size of

a telephone handset and cost just about \$1,000, making it light enough for a soldier to carry and inexpensive enough to be fielded widely.

The Radar Scope will be waterproof and rugged, and will run on AA batteries, he said.

"It may not change how four-man stacks go into a room (during clearing operations)," Baranoski said. "But as they go into a building, it can help them prioritize what rooms they go into. It will give them an extra degree of knowledge so they know if someone is inside."

Even as the organization hurries to get the devices to combat forces, DARPA already is laying groundwork for bigger plans that build on this technology.

Proposals are expected this week for the new "Visi Building" technology that's more than a motion detector. It will actually "see" through multiple walls, penetrating entire buildings to show floor plans, locations of occupants and placement of materials such as weapons caches, Baranoski said.

"It will give (troops) a lot of opportunity to stake out buildings and really see inside," he said. "It will go a long way in extending their surveillance capabilities."

The device is expected to take several years to develop. Ultimately, servicemembers will be able to use it simply by driving or flying by the structure under surveillance, Baranoski said.



Task Force Baghdad reports



Six terrorists detained in search

2nd BCT Public Affairs
101st Airborne Division

BAGHDAD — Task Force Baghdad Soldiers detained six known terrorists during a cordon and search in southern Baghdad.

The search also yielded materials commonly used to make improvised explosive devices. Soldiers seized PVC pipes, rubber used in pressure plate IEDs, wires and ball bearings.

A total of 15 people were detained during the operation.

Tip aids Iraqi Police in seizing VCIED

TFB Public Affairs

BAGHDAD — After receiving a tip from an anonymous Iraqi citizen, Iraqi Police and Task Force Baghdad Soldiers seized a vehicle-carried improvised explosive device in southern Baghdad. The Joint Coordination Center received the tip at approximately 7:40 p.m. warning of a suspicious vehicle. Iraqi Police and Task Force Baghdad Soldiers responded and the VCIED was rendered safe by explosive ordinance disposal teams.

Iraqi Police identify two car bombs

TFB Public Affairs

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Police coordinated with Coalition Forces to foil two terrorist attempts to use vehicle-carried improvised explosive devices against Iraqi citizens Monday.

While on patrol, police officers identified a suspicious vehicle while operating in western Rashid and notified a Coalition Force patrol. About three hours later, Iraqi Police teamed up again with Coalition Force Soldiers after receiving an anonymous tip.



MSgt. Randy L Mitchell

Air Force Staff Sgt. Salvador Russo, with the 447th Expeditionary Communications Squadron, spent Christmas at Baghdad International Airport with his mother, Sgt. First Class Ana Russo, who is deployed to Tallil, Iraq.



Courtesy photo

1st Sgt. Matt Splechter, Company B, 1st Battalion, 172nd Stryker Brigade, was reunited with his son, Airman 1st Class Josh Splechter, 732nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group, in Tal Afar, Iraq on Christmas Eve.

Service, family members spend holidays together in Iraq

Army mother, Air Force son spend Christmas in Baghdad

Master Sgt. Randy Mitchell
Armed Forces News Service

BAGHDAD — Some families go through a great deal to spend time with loved ones on Christmas, but rarely do they deploy to the desert to do so. One family did, however, and they were able to spend this special holiday together.

Air Force Staff Sgt. Salvador Russo, a secure communications craftsman with the 447th Expeditionary Communications Squadron, received a special Christmas gift this year when his mother traveled from Tallil, Iraq to spend the holiday weekend with him here.

Sgt. First Class Ana Russo, who deployed to Tallil with the

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 485th Combat Support Battalion in November, had sought permission from her commander to spend Christmas with her son.

"I will be in Tallil for a year," she said. "So this is the best gift I could receive, to spend time with my son during his first deployment. It is also a special time of the year when most families share time together."

This isn't Ana's first deployment to a war-time environment; the 17-year Army veteran was deployed for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. This is also her second tour to Iraq, she served at Al Taji in 2003.

Sal last saw his mother before he deployed here in September, while stationed at Ramstein Air Force Base.

"(Mom) came to Ramstein to visit me and we went to restaurants, shopping and just hung

out together relaxing," he said. "We cooked, laughed, watched movies and called family back in the States. She even helped me with a business writing course I was taking."

The two were hoping to share this Christmas with another family member, Ana's other son Robert, a senior airman assigned to the 55th Communications Squadron.

"My other son, Robert, volunteered to come to Iraq," Ana said. "But his chain of command did not allow it because his brother and I would be deployed here at the same time too."

Ana is thankful for the opportunities she's had to spend the holidays with her boys.

"I want to thank (the commanders) for giving us the opportunity to spend this special time together," she said. "I also want to say how very proud I am of my sons and the great job they do for our nation."

Army father, Air Force son reunite in Iraq for Christmas

Armed Forces News Service

TAL AFAR, Iraq — As a career infantryman, 1st Sgt. Matt Splechter has missed four Christmases away from family due to deployment overseas serving his nation.

He figured his current deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom would be no different, but on Christmas Day in a land far away from home, Splechter was proven wrong.

The 21-year Army veteran assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, was reunited with his son, Airman 1st Class Josh Splechter in Tal Afar, Iraq.

Josh, who volunteered to

come to Iraq, serves as an air transportation specialist supporting the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment at Forward Operating Base Sykes.

As soon as father saw his son, he gave him a big "infantry man" hug.

Although deployments have been a way of life for the Splechter family, this was the first time that both father and son had been deployed at the same time.

"My wife (Christy) doesn't worry a great deal because she's used to me being gone," Matt said. "But I know this [reunion] is some comfort to her to know that we're not alone for the holidays. She thinks it's great both of us are serving our country."

At the same time she has to double the amount of care packages she sends from Alaska, with both a husband and a son in uniform and deployed. The first sergeant added that the Army

has always been his family, but it is special to spend the holiday with "real blood family."

The younger Splechter, assigned to the 732nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group, thinks the reunion is "cool."

"It's a good feeling to see him all the way out here," said Josh, who has been in the Air Force for 18 months.

Matt said he was excited upon hearing his son would be stationed at Tal Afar, a city only 70 kilometers from his camp.

The reunion wouldn't have been possible without the support of both service members' chains of command. Splechter's command sergeant major and commander were 100 percent supportive of him spending Christmas with Josh, and told him, "Go see your son."

"This is very unique and rewarding," Matt said. "This is a good Christmas present."

FA battery delivers medical care before Christmas

Staff Sgt. John R. Rozean
10th Mountain Div., Public Affairs

BAGHDAD — Some Soldiers come to Iraq with a very simple goal make it through the tour and return to the States, safely.

The Soldiers of Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 6th Field Artillery have set their aspirations much higher.

“When we came over here,” said Battery A Commander Capt. Fritz Keel, “We came over under the idea that we wanted to help the people of Iraq.”

The unit spends most of its time patrolling a sector of Baghdad that consists of a small rural farming community just outside of Camp Liberty.

But Keel and his troops set their standards of “helping” a bit higher.

“I think that one of the ways we can best benefit (the Iraqi civilians) is by providing them the limited medical support that we have here in the battalion,” said Keel.

The field artillery unit brought some of the people from this small Iraqi community, west of Baghdad, a gift Dec. 22.

The unit provided limited health care and gave away such things as — hygiene products, toys, clothing and school supplies.

“I enjoy doing this,” said Capt. James Mitchell, 3/6 FA medical officer. “This is the fun part of the job where you get out and you get a chance to help people who may not otherwise get any chance to get access to any health care. So, I enjoy being able to do that.”

This FA unit is not assigned civil affairs assets — Army personnel and resources specifically designed for these types of medical civil action programs. The battalion uses what medical personnel and resources it has — medics and physician assistants to get the job done. And on occasion, they ask favors from other 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain “docs.” Medics and physicians from Company C, 10th Brigade Support Battalion went along for the ride to help out on the Dec. 22 MEDCAP.

“I think it went really well,” Mitchell said. “And I appreciate all the help and the support from the people we have out here.”

This is the second time the unit has done this since they arrived in Iraq four months ago, and they plan to do it again. “Once a month is what we are shooting for,” Keel said.

“This is definitely one of the more fulfilling missions out here on this deployment,” said Pfc. Seth Musikant, 3/6 FA medic. “Especially being a medic, because you actually feel like you are contributing something major to the people.”

“I feel great about it,” said Sgt. Winston Johnson, who was in charge of security at one of the perimeter gates during the MEDCAP. “We get to do something different now so it is a nice change of pace.”

Johnson said his typical missions in the area of operations involve seeking out threats to the Iraqi people and Coalition Forces.

“The Iraqi people in this area see us every day but they don’t get to see us as much in this atmosphere,” he said. “They usually observe 3/6 FA Soldiers walking through their homes and



File photo

The Medical Civil Affairs Program is an essential element of nation building. These missions often bring medical aid to remote locations where such treatment is rare.

their yards going after people who aren’t supposed to be there. I think we are doing good things out here.”

By the end of the day the unit was able to see more than 150 patients from the area and distributed nearly all the medication that they lugged out to the site.

“Everything that we thought we had enough for we did,” said Musikant. “But we just about

ran out, which is a good thing because we are pretty much done and we have seen the bulk of the community.”

Upon returning to base camp, the Soldiers began to plan for the next time. “We wanted to capture what went well so we can apply that to the next MEDCAP,” Keel said. “It is a pleasure to do this kind of stuff for the Iraqi people. We look forward to doing it again soon.”

Soldiers carry on tradition

Frontline Staff

In September 1969, Loc Ninh, Vietnam, Capt. Ken Bonnell was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for valorous actions as an advisor to the 34th Vietnamese Ranger Battalion by the late Maj. Gen. George Casey, then a task force commander for operations along the Cambodian border.

Thirty-six years later, siblings took a moment to honor their fathers Dec. 24, 2005 in Baghdad. General George Casey Jr., commander of Multi-National Forces-Iraq and a classmate with retired Lt. Col. Ken Bonnell earlier in their careers, made time to award the Bronze Star Medal to Maj. Bryon Bonnell for service during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Bonnell currently serves as the Secretary of the General Staff for 3rd Infantry Division and Multi-National Division Baghdad. His previous assignment was as the executive officer for Task Force 1/64 Armor in eastern Baghdad.



Army photo

General George Casey Jr., Multi-National Forces-Iraq commander, awards a Bronze Star Medal to Maj. Bryon Bonnell, 3rd Inf. Div.



POLICE REPORTS

Subject: Family Member, 18, Female
Charge: Driving while license cancelled, failure to wear safety belt
Location: Fort Stewart

Subject: Sergeant, 24, Male
Charge: Driving under the influence
Location: Savannah, Ga.

Subject: Specialist, 23, Male
Charge: Driving under the influence
Location: Savannah, Ga.

Subject: Specialist, 28, Male
Charge: Failure to control pet
Location: Hunter AAF

Subject: Civilian, 36, Male
Charge: Unlawful transfer of tag, failure to register vehicle in 30 days
Location: Hunter AAF

Subject: Civilian, 36, Male
Charge: Driving while license suspended
Location: Hunter AAF

Subject: Family Member, 19, Female
Charge: Theft of public property
Location: Fort Stewart

Subject: Private, 23, Male
Charge: Driving under the influence
Location: Long County, Ga.

Subject: Sergeant, 23, Male

Charge: Drunk in public, public indecency
Location: Savannah, Ga.

Subject: Civilian, 24, Male
Charge: Fraud and misuses of visas, entering military, naval, or coast guard property
Location: Hunter AAF

Subject: Civilian, 27, Male
Charge: Criminal trespass
Location: Hunter AAF

Subject: Family Member, 16, Female
Charge: Improper backing
Location: Fort Stewart

Subject: Sergeant, 31, Male
Charge: Failure to obey general order
Location: Hunter AAF

Subject: Civilian, 41, Male
Charge: Theft of public property
Location: Fort Stewart

Subject: Civilian, 34, Male
Charge: Driving under the influence
Location: Fort Stewart

Subject: Family Member, 18, Female
Charge: Theft of public property
Location: Fort Stewart

Subject: Specialist, 39, Male
Charge: Driving under the influence, speeding
Location: Richmond Hill, Ga.

Subject: Private, 22, Male
Charge: Simple battery on a police officer, disorderly conduct
Location: Savannah, Ga.

Subject: Civilian, 48, Female
Charge: Theft by shoplifting
Location: Hunter AAF

Subject: Sergeant, 26, Male
Charge: Assault within maritime and territorial jurisdiction
Location: Hunter AAF

Subject: Specialist, 27, Male
Charge: Simple assault, consummated by battery, child endangerment
Location: Hunter AAF

Legal Notice

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of **SGT Jackson, Nicholas J**, Alpha Battery, 1st BN. 41st FA (DIV Color Guard), Fort STEWART, GA 31314, contact CPT DANIEL PRESUTTI, D Battery, 1-41 FA, FT STEWART, GA 31314, phone: 912-767-1369 or 912-272-7377 (3)

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of **CPT Kevin Smith**, 1-76 FA BN, Fort STEWART, GA 31315, contact 2LT Riley Palmer, 1-76 FA BN, Fort STEWART, GA 31314, phone 912-767-2027 (3)

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of **SPC Lucas, Joseph A.**, A TRP, 5-7 CAV, FT STEWART, GA 31314, contact CW2 Coleman, HHT 5-7 CAV, FT STEWART, GA 31314, phone: 912-767-3395. (2)

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of **SSG Mitchell, Curtis A.**, D Troop, 3d Squadron, 7th Cavalry, FT Stewart, GA 34314, Contact 2LT Ted Russell 1/64 AR BN, FT. Stewart, GA 31314, phone 912-756-7420.(2)

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of **SPC Nelson, Lex S.**, HHB 1/41 FA, FT STEWART, GA 31313, contact 2LT JOSH CAIN, HHB 1/41 FA, FT STEWART, GA 31313, phone: 912-767-1369. (2)

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of **SPC Anthony O. Cardinal**, 3/7 Cav, B Troop, Fort Stewart Georgia 31314 contact CW2 John Barnett Jr, HHC 26th Forward Support BN, FSGA 31314, Phone 767-8790 (1)

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of **SPC Gudino, Sergio**, 1/64 AR BN, 3rd ID, FT Stewart, GA 31314, contact 2LT Andrew Coody 1/64 AR BN, FT Stewart, GA 31314, phone: 205-807-0032. (1)

3ID IN BRIEF

Hunter

Transportation Office opens at Hunter

Hunter families and units no longer need to go to Stewart to make moving arrangements.

The Directorate of Logistics Transportation Office is now open 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. in building 1228, across from the post office.

For information and appointments, call 315-2828 or 767-2828.

Infant Massage Workshop

Workshops are scheduled 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., Jan. 5, 12, and 19 at Army Community Services.

Call Rosa, 315-6816, for information.

Hunter Spouses' Club Luncheon

Luncheon is scheduled 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., Jan. 10 at Hunter Club's Bar Room. Those interested in joining are welcome to attend. Lunch is \$10.

RSVP to Tiffany Boyce, 925-1687 or Hunter_Spouses_Club@yahoo.com

Upcoming Vet Clinic

Clinic is scheduled 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. for appointments only on Jan. 20 at the Hunter Vet Clinic.

Call 912-767-4194/ 2842 for appointment.

Road Closure #1

Duncan Dr. between Stephen Douglas and Billy Mitchell Blvd. is closed to through traffic until 5 p.m. on Feb. 28 to facilitate installation utilities, storm drainage systems and parking lot expansion (crossing Duncan Dr.) for the new barracks construction adjacent to this location.

The entire section of roadway will be resurfaced and re-stripped prior to reopening. Detour signage and alternate routes will also be posted.

Road Closure #2

South Perimeter Rd. and Gannam Ave. (N. of the Youth Activity Center) is closed for construction activity until Jan. 15.

The entrance to Wilson Acres Housing Area on Wilson Blvd. is open until construction is complete.

Savannah Technical College

Representatives from the college will visit the Hunter Education Center Wednesdays, Noon – 3 p.m., to answer your questions about certificates, diplomas and college programs.

Call Clarendia Bownes, enrollment manager and marketing specialist, at 443-3016 for information or contact the campus at 443-5700.

Family Advocacy Program

Installation Victim Advocates are available 24 hours, 7 days a week to provide information, support, referrals, and reporting options to victims/survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Call 315-5343, to speak with an advocate at Hunter.

Youth Dance Classes

The \$30 classes include Creative Movement for 3 – 5 year olds, 5:45 – 6:45 p.m. and jazz and ballet for 6 – 9 year olds, 6:45 – 7:45 p.m.

For more information, call 315-5708.

Tae Kwon Do Classes

Held Tuesdays and Thursdays for ages 5 – 18, 6 – 7 p.m., ACS Bldg. 1286. Must be registered with Children Youth Services to participate. Cost is \$25 to attend twice weekly; \$15 to attend once weekly. Payments are due on the 28th of the month, prior to class.

Call 353-5708 for information.

Leisure Travel Office

Buy discounted tickets to theme parks, hotels and more.

Call 303-3674 or visit the office 11 a.m. – 6 p.m., Mon. through Fri. in ACS.

From Exam ————— Page 1A

Every Soldier needs to have a face-to-face with the VA upon receipt of orders for separation whether for ETS or retirement.

For VA Disability claims, Soldiers can drop their claim no earlier then 180 and no later then 45 days prior to their final out.

However, if they wait until they are 45 days short, they will not be able to get into the Shared Exam Program and will have to do their physical at the MTF.

Per regulation, a physical exam is mandatory for retirees but can be waived by Soldiers who are ETSing.

The physical exam does not include HIV testing or HEP C vaccination.

To qualify for the Shared Exam Program, Soldiers need to stop by the VA Office in the Soldier Service Center (Bldg 253 Ste. 1056), or call 368-6950.

Hours of operation are 8a.m. - 12p.m. and 1p.m. - 4p.m., Monday through Thursday; and 8a.m. - 12p.m. on Friday.

From Update ————— Page 1A

troops and Iraqi security forces teamed up to conduct almost 2,500 different combat operations since Oct. 1, Webster said, and detained more than 3,600 insurgents over the course of more than 52,000 patrols.

“The pace of our operations, while intense, has disrupted the enemy and reduced car bombs by half,” Webster said.

U.S., Iraqi and coalition troops in the area are finding half of the terrorist-emplaced roadside bombs, he said, and there's been a 92-percent increase in the discovery of enemy weapons caches.

“This has put a big dent in the ability of the insurgents to continue to conduct operations,” Webster said, noting that aggressive operations against the terrorists will go on.

Tremendous gains have been made against terrorists in the Baghdad area, Webster said, noting only about 10 percent of recent terrorist attacks have caused damage, injury or death. Iraqi, U.S. and coalition troops, Webster said, have disrupted the enemy's ability to effectively use car bombs and improvised explosive devices, or roadside bombs.

“We have disrupted that ability so that they're now conducting more drive-by shootings which usually don't hit anybody, or they're shooting indirect fire — mortars and rockets — which also is mostly unsuccessful,” Webster said.

In short, “the insurgency has weakened since the (Dec. 15) elections,” Webster said.

Yet, there likely will be continued terrorist violence, he said, until the new Iraqi government is seated and its security forces are fully trained and deployed.

Webster said his command's goal is to transfer full responsibility for security in Baghdad over to Iraqi security forces.

“Conditions are being set to allow the Iraqis to run and secure their own country,” Webster said.

Webster said his unit is slated to return to the United States over the next 30 days after having served a one-year tour of duty in Iraq. The 3rd Infantry Division also was deployed to Iraq in 2003 for Operation Iraqi Freedom, and it played a prominent role in the seizure of Baghdad from Saddam Hussein's forces.

Guard troops battle Texas wildfires

Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada
Armed Forces Press Service

CAMP MABRY, Texas — What started with a statewide disaster declaration by Texas Gov. Rick Perry last week has resulted in aviation and engineer support from the National Guard to help extinguish a number of wildfires.

Perry ordered the deployment of state firefighting assets and issued a statewide disaster declaration Dec. 27.

The Texas National Guard deployed two UH-60 Black Hawks from the Austin Army Aviation Support Facility and two CH-47 Chinooks from the Dallas AASF in Grand Prairie.

The Louisiana National Guard sent three UH-60 Black Hawks with 18 crew members. The helicopters were readied to join firefighters in suppressing and containing numerous wildfires in areas the governor described as “tinderboxes.”

On Dec. 28, two of the Texas Black Hawks dropped 47 990-gallon buckets of water to support firefighters on the ground in southeast Travis County.

On Dec. 31, the Department of Emergency Management requested four bulldozers and tractor trailers from the Engineer Brigade to assist in Abilene, Texas. Nineteen Army Guard and two Air Guard personnel were deployed.

One refueler was requested Jan. 1 to support personnel in the Abilene area. The armory in Stephenville, Texas, was designated as an operating base.

Four Black Hawks assisted firefighters in Eastland County, and two Chinooks with the larger, 2,000-gallon buckets supported firefighters in Carbon Eastland County Jan. 1. The aircraft flew a total of seven-and-a-half hours and dropped a total of 17 buckets until nightfall.

On Jan. 2, aerial support continued with three Black Hawks and two Chinooks flying in support of



Texas Forest Service

A Texas Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk carries a ‘Bambi bucket’ to dump water on a targeted hot spot to stop a wildfire from spreading.

ground personnel.

Quick response from Louisiana was the result of the Emergency Management Assistance Council “Immediate Response” agreement, signed by governors across the country, officials said.

Even with 80,000 Army and Air National Guard members deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism, the skills and flexibility of Guard members have proven to be invaluable in any emergency situation related to their home-

land defense and homeland security missions, state officials said. Burn bans are in effect all across Texas and Oklahoma, and the United States Forest Service is asking the public to be vigilant and report fires even when they think they are minor.

Field artillery Soldiers protect 'ambassadors of goodwill'

Spc. Dan Balda
4th BCT Public Affairs

BAGHDAD — Marine Lt. Col. Steven Christensen, a logistician by trade, is the logistics advisor for the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, spending about 12 hours a week working directly with the MOI director-general of logistics. Because he splits his time between MOI and the U.S. Embassy, he spends a lot of time on the road.

While he's out traveling between locations, he said his security escort of choice is 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment.

"They keep things very low-key and are very responsive to my needs," he said. "They are extremely professional."

During one of Christensen's trips to the MOI, one Soldier from 1/76th FA showed the entire Army what it meant to be professional.

Spc. Miguel Carrasquillo was the

gunner in the lead truck when he saw a suicide bomber coming toward the convoy. He engaged the car with gunfire, causing the bomber to detonate his load early.

The explosion killed Carrasquillo, but spared the rest of the convoy, Christensen said.

This was just one example of how the field artillery unit has been able to rapidly adapt to a new mission after arriving in Iraq.

"(My first time in Iraq) I was here with a civil affairs team and we had to take a lot of Marines and convert them to civil affairs," Christensen said. "That's what we do in the military. You adapt, do your training and complete the mission."

Christensen has used civilian personal security detachment teams on a number of occasions. One of the things he appreciates about 1/76 FA is that they are more receptive to him as a passenger.

The last time Christensen was

offered a ride with a civilian PSD group he turned it down and asked that the mission be passed along to 1/76 FA.

Lisa Bachiller, who works with Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, feels much the same way Christensen does about 1/76 FA.

Bachiller works for the IRMO on implementing the advanced first responder network system. When finished, the system will offer 16 cities a 911 dispatch-type of capabilities.

This will allow the police and ambulances, among others, to respond to emergencies more efficiently. As part of her job, she must travel with a security escort all over the country.

She takes these meetings very seriously, and not just because it is her job but because she is taking a number of young men into the unpredictability of the Red Zone.

"It puts a lot of pressure on me personally to make sure I make the most

of the meetings that I plan," Bachiller said. "I often try to explain to the (1/76 FA Soldiers) what I'm doing so they understand how they are helping to reconstruct Iraq."

Even though she feels civilian PSDs treat Iraqis like the good, hard working people that they are, she has a kinship with 1/76 FA.

Bachiller has a 22-year-old son who just graduated from college and plans on joining the military in the near future. Since most of the Soldiers who escort her are close to her son's age, she feels protective of them.

"I look at them like they are my own children," Bachiller said. "They all have mothers just like me back in the States worrying about them."

"If something happens and I'm holding one of their sons after an attack, then I could look in the face of that mother, and tell her that it was worth it, that he gave his life for something important."

Since she would not be able to pick

many of the Soldiers she encounters out of a lineup because of the amount of protective gear they wear, she thinks of them as a group of quasi-Lone Rangers.

"They are like the masked men of goodwill, putting their lives on the line for me," Bachiller said.

"They are serving their country and believing in a higher mission of helping the Iraqi people and performing this mission with professionalism," he said. "They say, 'Well, if I can't shoot off artillery, I might as well drive around Baghdad and protect these State Department officials.'"

Their ability to safely maneuver through traffic adds to the blanket of safety Bachiller feels they wrap around her.

"They are vigilant and keep everybody safe while also being ambassadors of goodwill," Bachiller said. "I see it in the faces of the Iraqi people, they smile and look up in awe at the gunners."

Cavalry troopers deliver in rainy Rose Parade

Spc. Colby Hauser
1st Cavalry Div. Public Affairs

LOS ANGELES — Rain-soaked spectators roared with applause at the grandstand Jan. 2, as the Army's last mounted cavalry unit presented arms during one of the nation's largest parades.

The 1st Cavalry Division Horse Cavalry Detachment braved nature's wrath and basked in the adoration of more than 200,000 fans as they trotted down Colorado Avenue during the 117th Tournament of Roses Parade.

"This is what this trip has been all about," said Staff Sgt. Donnie Davis, a demonstration rider with the detachment. "You know, this is what we live for."

An odyssey, seven days in the making for the detachment, this year's parade performance was not without its challenges. It hadn't rained on this parade since 1955.

This year, it poured.

"It's only rained once in my lifetime," said Patsy Grant, a passenger on the Wells Fargo stage.

Grant said that after 25 years of coming to the parade, this was her first time participating in the event. Still, Grant said she had to find the right

type of ride to make her dream come true.

"I'm too old to be queen, I can't play a note and I'm afraid of horses so I had to find something to ride on," she said.

The line-up consisted of 48 floats, 25 marching bands, 23 equestrian units and three official vehicles which made their way down the five-and-one-half-mile route, fighting sheets of rain every inch of the way.

"Our biggest concern wasn't the horses, but the floats," said Gerald Freeny, the chairman of the equestrian committee for the parade. "By 2:30 this morning we were drilling holes in the bottom of the floats to help them drain water, but the real concern was the winds."

Local weather forecasts predicted four to eight inches of rain with winds in excess of 40 miles per hour for the parade. Still, with all the rain and wind, the show went on.

Soaked to the bone, the Soldiers played to the crowd, as "Buddy," the detachment's dog, howled to the delight to thousands of small children hoping to get a smile and a wave from one of the cavalrymen.

Past the grandstands and through the streets, Longhorn and Trojan fans were engaged in a tor-



Spc. Colby Hauser

The 1st Cavalry Division wagon and Horse Cavalry Detachment ground crew greet soggy spectators on South Orange Grove Boulevard during their performance at the 117th Tournament of Roses Parade Jan. 2 in Pasadena, Calif.

rid war of words, but as the First Team troops rode past those words turned to cheers for the Soldiers and what they represent.

Riding tall in the saddle and shivering from the cold, the members of the detachment were all smiles from beginning to end.

A lot has happened since their last appearance at the Tournament of Roses Parade, but for the

troopers it had been worth the wait.

"It's truly an honor to be back here," Sgt. 1st Class Rip Bussell, detachment platoon sergeant, said.

"Coming to the parade and representing the Cav and the Army is an honor, but talking to the people about who we are and what we really do makes things like this worthwhile," he said.

Prison stands as testament to Saddam's evil

Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

FOB LOYALTY, Iraq — Saddam Hussein, sitting in a defendant's chair, looks harmless and slightly ridiculous. But his deserted facilities at this base are testament to his evil.

The Americans moved onto the grounds of what was Saddam's Directorate of Internal Security. At its center is a prison that could comfortably hold 500. At times, it had 3,000 people jammed into it.

The prison had no name and is surrounded by the high-rise quarters that once housed the torturers and their families. One corner of the prison — the

area with the guard's offices — was hit by a precision-guided bomb.

Now the area is the headquarters of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 3rd Infantry Division. The Marne Division soldiers use cells as storage areas and arms rooms.

"We have local nationals who still won't walk near it," said Army Capt. Melissa Ringhisen, a military intelligence officer who is the "mayor" of this base. "People would disappear from the streets and end up here. There is a whole system of tunnels under the base leading from the prison to the hospital to the headquarters. Once the prisoners went in, they didn't see the sun again."

Saddam built a house just over the

wall from the prison and could watch as guards tortured high-interest prisoners. Many were tortured to death. "The Soldiers here before us said there was a wood chipper in the prison to dispose of the bodies," Ringhisen said.

Other cells had bunks for eight, but typically the guards would jam in 20 people. The 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment — the U.S. unit that first occupied the forward operating base — once offered tours of the prison for Iraqis, but stopped the practice because of the force protection situation.

Ringhisen said she doesn't know if it would be better to raze the structure or preserve it as a museum and a remembrance of those who died there.



Jim Garamone

The damaged grounds of Saddam Hussein's Directorate of Internal Security, where his dissenters were once tortured and imprisoned, stands as a testament to the former dictator's ruthlessness.